

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Ms. O'Keeffe at 6:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Alisa Brewer, Diana Stein, Gerry Weiss, Stephanie O'Keeffe

Absent: Aaron Hayden

Town Manager Larry Shaffer

Town Staff: David Ziomek, Director of Conservation and Development; John Musante, Assistant Town Manager and Finance Director; Sonia Aldrich, Comptroller

Members of the Public: Larry Kelley, Ernie Dalkas, Phil Jackson, Wendy Bloominthal

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Kelley asked that the commemorative flags be flown on September 11th this year and to make that one of the days that flags fly every year. Mr. Dalkas spoke in favor of the request, citing a local veteran injured in Afghanistan. Ms. O'Keeffe cited last year's policy decision to fly the flags every three years, and said that if a Select Board member asked to revisit that policy, the discussion would be put on the next agenda; otherwise the policy would remain unchanged.

Mr. Jackson asked about the planned Lincoln Ave. experiment (it is scheduled for early September), the status of the DPW's traffic calming plan (it will be informed by the Lincoln Ave. experiment data); the potential for expanding traffic patrols with the UMass police (many issues of increased cooperation between the two departments are in discussion); and the potential for changing the status of Lincoln as a primary fire safety response route to campus (any change in policy would wait until a new Fire Chief is appointed.)

SELECT BOARD'S ACTION

Setting Spring Town Meeting Dates – 2010

Ms. O'Keeffe talked about meeting with Ms. Seaman to create a recommended schedule with the signing of each Town Meeting warrant four weeks before the Town Meeting start date, to allow as much time as possible for Town Meeting Coordinating Committee events and other preparations. Appreciation was expressed for scheduling the dates early and reserving only Mondays and Wednesdays.

VOTED 4-0, 1 absent (Hayden) to schedule the Annual Town Meeting for May 3, 2010, and with additional sessions reserved for May 5, 10, 12, 17, 24 and 26 and June 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21 and 23, 2010.

New ACTV Community Outreach Coordinator

Ms. Bloominthal introduced herself to the Select Board and talked about her goals for expanding the use of ACTV production resources in and by the community.

No action taken.

Health Care Support Letter

Ms. Stein proposed that the Select Board sign on to a letter of support for health care reform put out by the U.S. Council of Mayors.

Action: By consensus, it was agreed to sign on to the support letter, and that Ms. Stein would handle those details.

Approve Signs in Public Way

Mr. Ziomek presented a plan to indicate preserved agricultural land with “Forever Farmland” signs, as has already begun in Hadley. The signage would be optional for the property owners, and would be placed at appropriate locations, not at every individual parcel, and the DPW would manage the logistics of their safe installation. The Select Board’s approval is necessary because they will be in the public way rather than on the preserved farmland, an alternative that creates complications.

VOTED: 4 – 0, 1 absent (Hayden) to approve the placement of the Forever Farmland signs in the public way, under the guidance of the DPW Superintendent.

Quarterly Budget Update – Year End Report FY09

Mr. Musante and Ms. Aldrich presented the budget update for the year-end of FY09. General Fund Revenues received were at 99% of the original budget, with local revenues exceeding budgeted amounts while State revenues were less. Expenditures were at 98% of budgeted amounts, but with about \$1 million of the “surplus” being not an actual surplus, as it resulted from actions undertaken to deal with mid-year cuts from the State (the health insurance premium holiday, transferring elementary school budget expenses to Federal stimulus grant.) Additional details are provided in the memo from Mr. Musante titled “FY09 Municipal Budget Quarterly Budget/Actual Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2009” dated August 21, 2009.

No action taken.

FY09 Town Manager Evaluation/FY10 Goals

Discussion continued about the evaluation process timeline and about new and continuing goals for the Town Manager.

Action: by consensus, it was decided to extend the deadline for Select Board evaluations from Wednesday (8/26) to Friday (8/28) and to meet on Monday (8/31) to present the FY09 evaluation.

Committee Handbook Revisions

There was discussion about proposed edits to the Committee Handbook and changes to the appointment procedure. Needed improvements were noted including: better ways to track communication with applicants over the 2-year “live” status of their Citizen Activity Forms, and the logistics and necessity of individuals filling out multiple CAFs for subsequent committee interests. Problems with the CAF and current tracking system were noted. The question was raised about filling vacancies with willing applicants versus targeted recruiting or leaving a vacancy until a stronger application was received, and the complications of dealing with concerns about applicants in open meeting were noted. The issue of if and how a committee member might be removed for inappropriate behavior or reasons other than excessive absences was raised, with the suggestion that legal advice be sought on the matter.

Action: by consensus, it was agreed that Ms. Stein and Ms. Brewer would keep thinking about and working on these issues and bring recommendations to the Select board.

Liaison Reports

Agricultural Commission: Ms. Stein reported on plans for the October 3rd farm festival and said the commission is considering concerns raised by farmers using public land – that they lack leases, and can’t have farm stands.

Committee on Homelessness: Mr. Weiss reported that the committee continues to pursue permanent and emergency housing options, and that the committee is looking to be a resource to the Police Department in dealing with homeless individuals.

250th Celebration Committee: Ms. Brewer said that volunteers are still needed for the Sept. 27th parade. She also reported that concerns have been raised about Yom Kippur beginning at sundown that day, and said the committee discussed that with the Rabbi and other members of the Jewish Community of Amherst when it was looking at dates five years ago. Because of conflicts with other dates, the 27th was chosen, and the parade will end well before sundown, and it is acknowledged with regret that some may not be able to attend because they are busy with preparations for the holiday.

Conservation Commission: Ms. O’Keeffe said that the Select Board may need to make the Puffers Pond 2020 Committee appointments, rather than the Conservation Commission handling those. She said she would expect that Select Board to simply make such appointments official, in keeping with past practice.

No action taken.

Annual Report

It was noted that this was the time of year for notifying committees of the deadline for their annual reports. Ms. Brewer said she would follow up with Ms. Arcamo on the status of that. Ms. Brewer noted that some volunteers had expressed interest in editing the FY09 Annual Report, and that she would report back to the Select Board when she knows more. There was no new status to report on the FY08 report.

Select Board Meeting Date

Ms. O’Keeffe noted that the September 28th meeting would need to be rescheduled due to the conflict with Yom Kippur. She presented a calendar with the “no work” days of Jewish holidays marked.

Action: by consensus, it was decided to meet on September 21st instead of September 28th.

Chair’s Report

Ms. O’Keeffe reported on the following:

- Her meeting with the new School Superintendent, to bring greetings from the Select Board;
- Having sent letters to the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission’s Metropolitan Planning Organization, in support of funding for the Atkins Corner Project
- Not being available to attend an upcoming event welcoming international students to the community; Ms. Stein said she would attend if she is available.

No action taken.

Committee Appointments

VOTED 4-0, 1 absent (Hayden), to appoint Richard Roznoy, Agricultural Commission (Non-voting Representative of the Planning Board), for a term to expire June 30, 2012.

LICENSES AND PERMITS

New Taxi Business – Green Transportation

VOTED 4-0, 1 absent (Hayden), to approve the New Taxi Business License for Green Transportation, 479 West Street, Suite 6B, Managers: Gary Allard & Monique Santos.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Shaffer reported on the following:

- Attending the PVPC MPO meeting, and that group's vote to recommend funding for the Atkins Corner project to the Governor's Office and the Executive Office of Transportation; he expressed appreciation for that support
- That he spoke to the Planning Director about the Master Plan's status, and that it is nearing completion by the Planning Board; and that if the phased growth bylaw were to lapse, there is no concern about exceeding its development caps because we are nowhere near those limits anyway;
- Budget News: The Fire Department's overtime budget has been cut about 44% over two years, affecting response time and service delivery; a grant application has been submitted, seeking Federal funds to replace the FY10 overtime budget cuts
- His participation in an ACTV program with Isaac BenEzra about the budget outlook this year and in the near future
- That the Connect CTY system was used to notify those in neighborhoods abutting the University that UMass will conduct testing of its emergency alert system over the next day or so
- That he recommends presenting the new Quint fire truck to the Select Board and the community at a Select Board meeting, if arrangements can be made.
- That the regional emergency dispatch study has begun with the contractor, who will be in town conducting interviews and analysis over the next several weeks; and we hope to hear soon about the status of the grant to fund the next part of the process
- That Scott Livingstone has been selected as the new Police Chief; and appreciation was expressed for the work of Captain Mike Kent, who has served as the interim Chief
- That the grand opening of the Plum Brook athletic fields will be held Saturday, Aug. 29th at 10:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

VOTED unanimously, to adjourn the open meeting at 8:48 p.m.

-- Respectfully submitted by Stephanie O'Keeffe